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NSC BRIEFING

11 February 1954

RHEE'S PROPOSED ASIAN ANTI-COMMUNIST FRONT

1. Rhee's renewed threat on 9 February to reopen the war, and the departure of a second South Korean mission on 10 February to SEA, highlights his determined efforts to promote a militant anti-Communist program in the Far East.

A. Following Rhee's visit to Taipei, a joint Rhee-Chiang statement on 29 November called for free Asian "governments and peoples" to organize a regional, anti-Communist front, with US logistical support.

B. In December Rhee sent a four-man good-will mission, under George Paik, to visit various SEA nations to sound out reactions to a proposed conference leading to a pact.

C. Although the Paik mission, on its return, told Rhee the Philippines and Thailand were ready to support a pact, most countries visited showed little enthusiasm for it or a willingness to accept Rhee as their spokesman.

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II.

A. He has already ordered American-made transmitters capable of covering the entire Far East with a propaganda program, which is likely to attack Japan, India, and even the U.S. in addition to the Communists.

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III. He plans to invite all Far East and SEA nations to a spring conference, as part of the campaign, and has commissioned two US advisers to plan and propagandize it.

A. Rhee has made strong efforts to get Magsaysay to assume leadership of an Asian anti-Communist front, although Rhee desires covertly to dominate it.

1. Rhee firmly believes American intervention won Magsaysay the election and probably feels greater US support would be forthcoming if Magsaysay assumed leadership.

2. Foreign Minister Pyun told an American embassy official on 9 February that "as everyone knows," Magsaysay would do nothing without US approval.

B. On 28 January, Rhee proposed to send one ROK division to aid in the defense of Laos; subsequently, he told US officials he contemplated making the announcement public to buttress his plans for Asian unity.

C. On 10 February a second good-will mission under Maj. Gen. Choi Duk-sin left to visit 6 SEA nations; Choi said Asians must work out an effective alliance before asking US for further aid.

1. One SK newspaper stated purpose of second mission was to sell the idea of keeping Japan out of the conference.

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IV. Reactions to the proposed conference.

- A. Chinese Nationalists share Rhee's desire for Magsaysay leadership, but fear Rhee is pushing the Philippine leader too hard.
  - 1. ChiNat amb to Manila wants Magsaysay to call conference at Baguio, inviting chiefs of SEA nations, Chiang, Rhee, and Japan.
- B. Burma not likely to participate in Rhee's proposed conference which might appear directed at Communist China.
  - 1. Burma's long frontier with China makes it wary of any action that antagonistic to Peiping.
  - 2. Burma does not recognize Chiang's government and has not regularized relations with South Korea and the Philippines.
- C. Indonesia, in keeping with its present independent policy, will not respond to any lead from Rhee, Chiang, or any other Asian leaders associated with the US.
  - 1. The first ROK mission to SEA apparently could not get visas to enter Indonesia.
- D. Throughout most of SEA, too close association with Rhee and Chiang would destroy favorable attitude now developing toward Magsaysay.

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E. Japan's attitude is also important.

1. As Vice President Nixon pointed out,  
"if Japan falls, all SEA goes, and if  
SEA succumbs, Japan will also fall.
2. Because of SEA's economic importance to  
Japan, Magsaysay's influence in Japan  
will be directly related to his influence  
in SEA.
3. Ambassador Allison believes that while  
Japan would attend an economic-cultural  
conference, Chiang-Rhee sponsorship  
would increase Japanese suspicions.
4.  there  
is no real prospect of a regional arrangement  
including Japan <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ Korea even in the economic  
and cultural fields.
5. Japan's sensitivity over rearmament precludes  
its participation in any regional military  
arrangement.

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V. Magsaysay's role in the proposed front.

- A. Magsaysay has had little experience in international  
affairs and is reportedly opposed to championing  
any anti-Communist crusade now.
- B. Many of his Nacionalista Party colleagues would  
oppose his branching into international fields  
until he has proved himself at home.

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C. He has many domestic problems which are sufficient to occupy him fully for the next six months.

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RHEE'S PROPOSED ASIAN  
ANTI-COMMUNIST FRONT

- I. Rhee threat renew war; departure  
second mission hilites program.
  - A. Joint Rhee-Chiang statement.
  - B. In December, good-will mission.
  - C. Little enthusiasm in SEA.
- II. Rhee's propaganda program.
  - A. American transmitters.
- III. Wants FE Conference this spring.
  - A. Rhee wants Magsaysay to lead.
    - 1. Thinks US would support Magsaysay.
    - 2. Pyun says Magsaysay not move without US approval.
  - B. One division to Laos.
  - C. Second good-will mission 10 Feb.

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IV. Chinats want Magsaysay; fear Rhee pushing too hard.

A. Chinat Amb. wants conf. at Baguio; discuss economic, cultural matters.

B. Burma not likely participate.

1. Long frontier Commie China.

2. Don't recognize Chiang; relations SK and Phil. not regularized.

C. Indonesia independent policy; not respond to Rhee.

D. Throughout all Asia same.

V. Japan's attitude important.

A. Nixon statement.

B. Would attend economic-cultural conf; suspicious.

C.

D. Sensitivity over rearmament.

VI. Magsaysay little experience international affairs.

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